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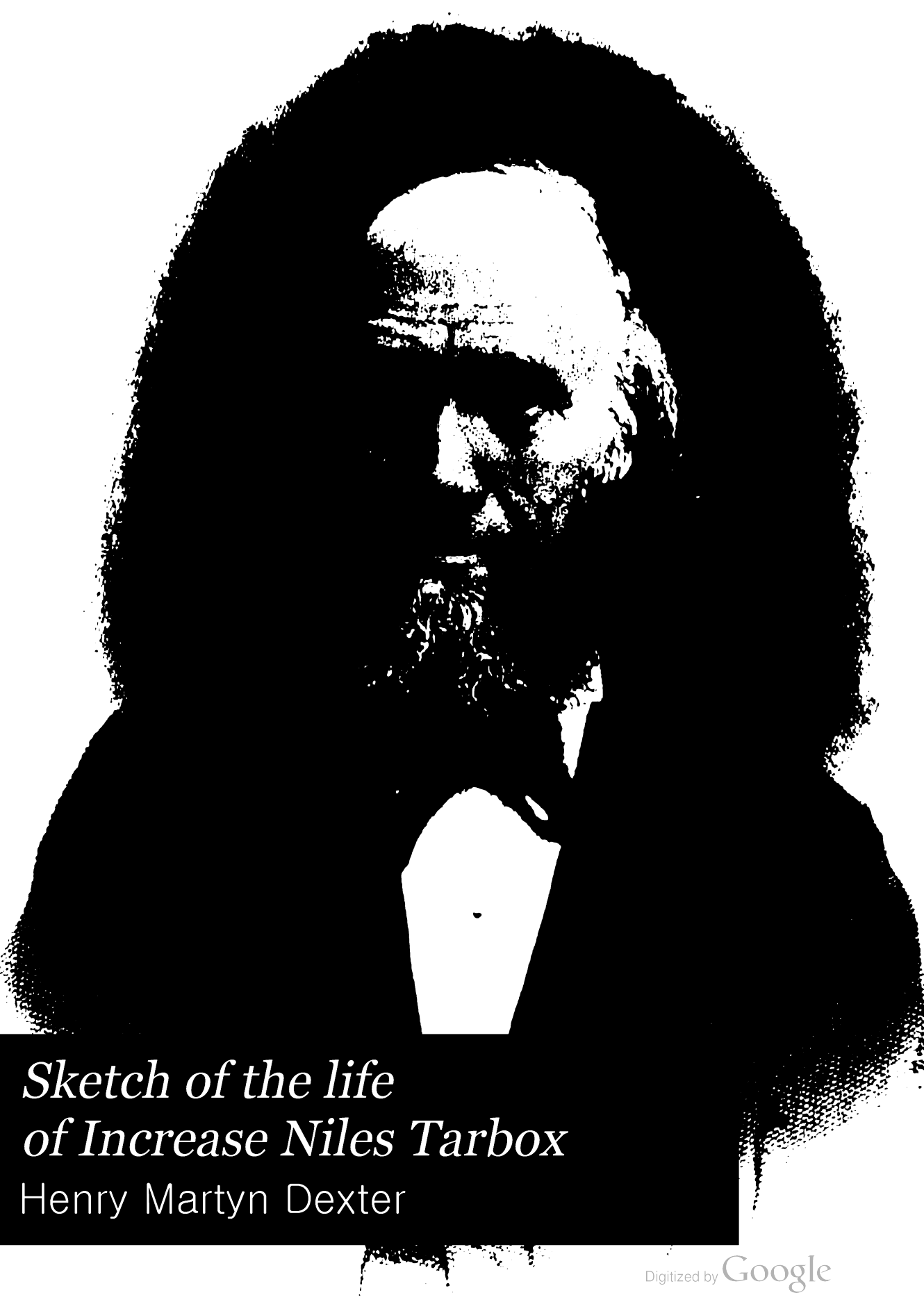
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of Increase Niles Tarbox*

Henry Martyn Dexter

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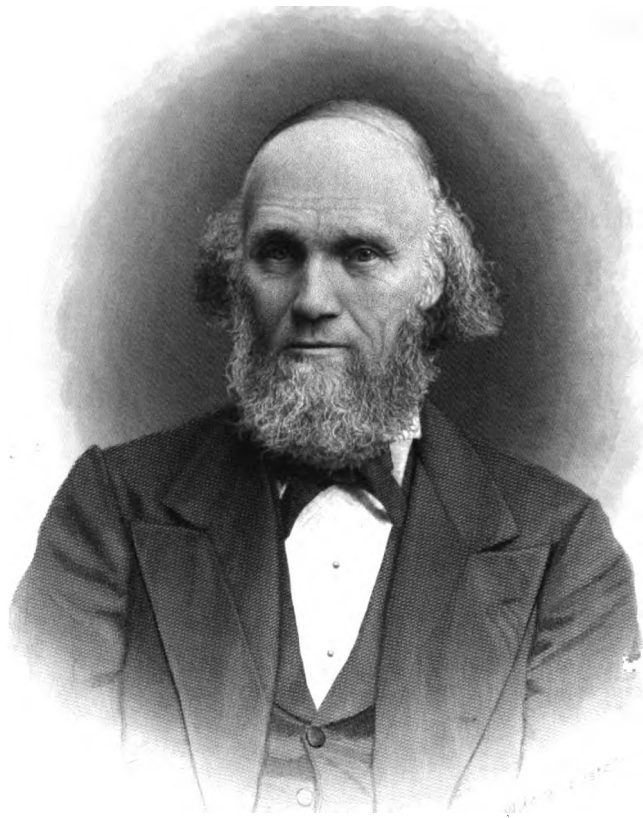
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**Tarbox.**









*Isaac N. Taylor*





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**SKETCH**

**OF THE LIFE OF**

**INCREASE NILES TARBOX.**

**BY**  
**HENRY MARTYN DEXTER.**

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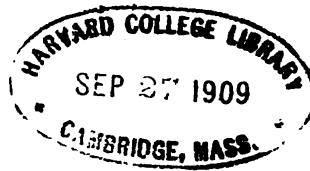
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## INCREASE NILES TARBOX, D.D., S.T.D.

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**D**R. TARBOX was of Puritan descent, and, more fortunate than many, was able to identify on both sides its successive links from almost the earliest days of Massachusetts. In his father's line that descent was through Thomas, Jonathan, Thomas, Godfrey, Godfrey, and Samuel, to John Tarbox, who was in Lynn in 1639.\* On the mother's side it was by Lucy, daughter of John, through Increase, Increase, David, and John, to John Porter, who, in 1638, was one of the earliest settlers from Massachusetts of Windsor, Conn. His father was born in Hebron, Conn., in 1776, and was a baby in the cradle—the first-born of his family—when *his* father Jonathan joined the army of the revolution.

Dr. Tarbox was born in East Windsor, Conn., on Saturday, Feb. 11, 1815. He was so unfortunate as to lose his mother twenty-two days after he was one year old, and his father when but a month and ten days more than nine years old; by consequence being thrown upon his own resources at a tender age. In his verses, published many years after, he went back to these days in the sweet little poem called "My Mother's Grave," in which he tenderly referred to the mothering care which the desolated flock had from their oldest sister :

\* Dr. Tarbox never felt sure that he had found the exact place where his genealogy united itself to that of some English family of the name.

The elder born, a sister sweet,  
 Would often lead our younger feet  
 Around this simple grave to meet—  
     I mind it well;  
 And here our mother's words repeat,  
     Her counsels tell.

With touches of maternal art  
 She tried to act the mother's part,  
 And fold us to her swelling heart  
     With tender tone—  
 To wipe our tear-drops as they start,  
     And leave her own.

In March, 1825, a little less than a year after his father's death, the lad went to reside with an uncle in Vernon, Conn. But the death of that uncle left him, at the age of fourteen, to return to East Windsor, to live with Mr. John Bissell, and to assist him in his farm-work. This proved a good home, and young Tarbox remained there faithfully discharging his multifarious—if simple and humble—duties, and quietly laying in a stock of sound physical health, and of solid common sense views of men and things, which stood him in good stead thereafter, until the autumn of 1833, when—in his nineteenth year—Mr. Bissell released him that he might teach a district school in North Coventry, Conn., where he imparted what he himself had learned in the common schools, so far his sole reliance, augmented from his private reading and his own stores of reflection. The next spring he went to the Academy at East Hartford, Conn., to fit for college, whence, in the summer of the following year, he entered Yale. When it is remembered how little time he had been able to devote especially to his preparatory studies, it is obvious that he must have had an alert and apprehensive mind, and must have used prodigious application to study.

It was in connection with what was known as the "Great Revival" of 1831–32, that his attention was especially turned toward a religious life, and the work of preaching the Gospel; and the change which was wrought before his eyes in the character of the

farmer with whom he was living, produced a great effect upon his mind, and decided him to endeavor, if possible, to enter the Christian ministry.

The class which he entered at Yale, which graduated 94 members, was an exceptionally large and able one for those days ; having then been exceeded in numbers only by those of 1826 and 1837. Among those gathered in it who became variously well-known, were Charles Astor Bristed, who went over to take his degree in Trinity College, Cambridge, and whose "Five Years in an English University," published in 1852, did so much to familiarize American scholars with a subject before to them obscure ; Hon. Henry L. Dawes, still one of our honored Massachusetts Senators in the Congress of the United States ; Charles Hammond, LL.D., the distinguished educator at Monson ; Hon. Henry R. Jackson, judge of the Supreme Court of Georgia, and United States minister to Austria ; Dr. I. P. Langworthy, who, in various ways, earned so large respect in these regions ; Dr. Charles J. Stillé, professor in the University of Pennsylvania, and author of "How a Free People conduct a long War," and other valuable contributions to American literature ; Dr. Francis Wharton, perhaps equally eminent as a jurist and an Episcopal divine ; and Josiah Dwight Whitney, one of the most worthily renowned of American geologists. Among men like these our friend ranked well, and was held in honor. Graduating in 1839, he went at once back to East Hartford, to teach in the Academy where he had prepared himself for college, and remained there until, in 1842, he was elected tutor in his *Alma Mater*, and removed thither to assume the duties of that position. Under the system which then prevailed in the college, such an appointment was an indication not only of the superior scholarship of the man receiving it, but also of the confidence of the faculty in his general good sense, and capacity for affairs. Mr. Tarbox held this place, with great acceptance, for two years, at the same time, with characteristic diligence and success, pursuing the sacred studies of the profession which he had chosen in the Divinity School of the Institution, whence he graduated with honor at the anniversary of 1844.



In the following autumn he became pastor of what is now the Plymouth Congregational Church in Framingham, Mass.—which used to be known as the "Hollis Evangelical Church"—where he was ordained on Wednesday, 20 November, 1844; the sermon being preached by Rev. S. W. S. Dutton, of New Haven, Conn.; the Ordaining Prayer made by Rev. Josiah Ballard, of Sudbury; the charge to the Pastor given by Rev. Joseph Haven, Jr., of Ashland; and the Right Hand of Fellowship by Rev. S. G. Buckingham, of Millbury.

In his various functions in Framingham the young minister—he was now nine-and-twenty—made himself soon acceptable not only to his own congregation, but to the entire community. He served, of course, for years on the School Committee, and was a Trustee of the Academy, and of the Public Library. In 1848 he delivered the address at the Consecration of the Edgell Grove Cemetery, in whose "quiet resting-places," with three members of his family, what was mortal of him now sleeps. His fellow townsmen gave significant testimony to their sense of the wisdom which he had in public questions, when, in 1836, they made him chairman of the committee for the erection of the buildings for their High School in the Centre Village, and at Saxonville.

The very name which up to this time his church had borne, indicated that Framingham was one of those rural communities which had passed through theological excitement. In fact it was only fourteen years before his coming that a separation had taken place between those members of the church who substantially adhered to the ancient faith, and a minority who went with the parish to constitute a Unitarian body. Dr. Nathaniel W. Taylor was then the ruling spirit in the New Haven Seminary, and if there were any one subject on which he more thoroughly instructed his students than on all others, it was the various doctrine which distinguished New England Orthodoxy from Socinianism. Mr. Tarbox fully accepted Dr. Taylor's system, and his clear way of thinking made it impossible for him not to take sides theologically on such a question. But his

regnant common sense, with the geniality of his temper, made it quite impossible for him to be an extremist, or to become a nuisance in his way of holding what to him were sacredest and vital truths. By consequence a pleasant acquaintance grew up between him and the Rev. William Barry, then pastor of the Unitarian Society in Framingham—an agreeable and scholarly person, with whom he had many tastes in common, and who afterwards wrote the “History of Framingham.” It would be wrong not to mention here, in passing, a little incident which illustrates the good-feeling which came to reign in the town, when—as a token of gratitude for many kindnesses done for the Unitarian people when destitute of a pastor, Mr. Tarbox was asked to accept a silver pitcher bearing the inscription—“Presented by the Ladies of the First Parish, Framingham, to Rev. Increase N. Tarbox, January, 1848.”

In the year after his settlement—the exact date being 4 June, 1845—Mr. Tarbox was united in marriage to Miss Delia A., daughter of Asa Waters, Esq., and Susan (Holman) his wife, of Millbury, Mass. Miss Waters was a sister of the wife of Rev. Dr. Dutton of the North Church in New Haven, and not a few who were residents of New Haven in those days must remember what a pleasant light beamed from the fine eyes of the younger sister when her elder sister’s dwelling received her visits—during one of which sprang up the attachment which ended in a happy and hallowed union which was terminated by her death only some five years before that of her husband.

In the spring of 1849, the exigences of the Congregational Churches—then a good deal stirred up between the “Old School,” who were represented by Dr. Woods of Andover and Dr. Tyler of East Windsor, and the “New School,” who more agreed on some points with Dr. Taylor of New Haven, Prof. Park of Andover, Dr. Ide of Medway, and many disciples of Dr. Emmons scattered up and down New England—seemed to require the establishment of a new weekly religious journal, for the satisfaction of numbers whose wants were not met by the—even then venerable—*Boston Recorder*. Accord-

ingly the first number of *The Congregationalist*—which in the same year absorbed the *Boston Reporter*, in 1851 the *Christian Times*, and in 1867 the *Boston Recorder* itself—was issued 25 May, 1849. Its three editors were Dr. Edward Beecher, then pastor of the Salem Church, Boston; Rev. Joseph Haven, Jr., then pastor of the Harvard Congregational Church in Brookline, and subsequently professor at Amherst College and in the Congregational Theological Seminary at Chicago; and Mr. Tarbox, then in his fifth year at Framingham. The new paper was designed to stand in doctrine upon the Bible essentially as interpreted by the New England Theology, under the shaping of the great Jonathan Edwards; and in morals was pledged “earnestly to oppose the extension of slavery in the slightest degree beyond its present limits.” Mr. Tarbox brought to it the judgment of a wide-awake yet prudent thinker, with the pen of an unusually ready writer, and his services for the more than two years during which he held the place, were most highly regarded, not merely in the way of literary criticism, but of general articles ably treating such developments of doctrine, and morals, and such phases of public events, as thrust themselves into discussion.

This, indeed, was not altogether new business to Mr. Tarbox. As early, at least, as during his college course, he had become a contributor to the press. In the *Yale Literary Magazine* for 1838–9, in the good company of Charles Astor Bristed, Donald G. Mitchell (Ik. Marvel), C. J. Stillé, the late Daniel P. Noyes, Dr. Daniel March, Dr. J. P. Gulliver, Prof. James M. Hoppin, Prof. Henry Booth and others, he appears as a contributor. And when during his tutorship the *New Englander* was started, he furnished for its initial number an original poem, and a careful review of the *Tecumseh* of George Hooker Colton, his friend, and the salutatorian of the class that came after his. These had been followed, in the same review, in 1846, by an article on “Fourierism,” and in 1849, by one on “George Hooker Colton”—too early deceased. So that, although not specially thrust into prominence by his position as a

pastor, Mr. Tarbox had already drawn toward himself the favoring opinion of a considerable portion of his own denomination, by whom he was regarded as one of the "coming men"; while the ready good sense with which he discharged every duty led many to feel that he possessed unusual qualifications for usefulness in some position other and wider than that of a pastor, where sound judgment, perfect integrity, and ready aptness for various service, were peculiarly demanded.

The "American Education Society"—now "The American and College Education Society"—happened just then to be looking about for some such man, to take hold of and prosecute its admirable work of aiding indigent young men into the Christian ministry—a work which had a little drifted out of the current of public regard into still water, and which needed re-energization. The Rev. Samuel Hopkins Riddel had recently left the position of its Secretary and Chief Actuary, and Rev. Dr. William Augustus Stearns, then pastor of the First Evangelical Congregational Church in Cambridgeport—a position which three years later he left to become President of Amherst College—had just declined a unanimous election to take Mr. Riddel's place. Its directors then were led to the choice of Mr. Tarbox, whom the Society elected; and, after much consideration, although his people with one voice and great urgency begged him to stay with them, it seemed to him that he ought to remove to the new field. He was accordingly dismissed on Wednesday, 2 July, 1851, by a Council of the vicinage, which, in their Result, said :

The case presented to the Council is not the less trying to personal feelings because it is one apparently of very plain duty. . . . The committee from the Church and Society expressed the deep and general regret, and painful reluctance with which they acceded to the request of their pastor, wishing the Council to understand that their unanimity was only in concession to his wishes, and against their own strong, decided and unanimous preferences.

The same issue of *The Congregationalist* (11 July, 1851) which

published this Result of Council, contained also Mr. Tarbox's resignation of his editorial responsibility—leaving, as his associates declared, a very serious vacancy of “an ever cheerful face, steady and wise counsels, and a racy and ready pen,” which, a few months later (24 Oct. 1851) the writer of this sketch was rash enough to try to fill.

From this hour steadily on, during the complete and rounded average life-time of an entire generation of our race, Mr. Tarbox gave himself with fidelity and enthusiasm to his new duties of removing from the path of pious and promising young men who were seeking to educate themselves for the Christian ministry, some of the most serious obstacles which hedged and blocked their way. From two to four hundred were usually thus at the same time under his oversight. Sagacity, approachableness, and thorough friendliness, with the ability, in need, to administer salutary reproof, and always to hold a just as well as steady hand amidst the balancings of probabilities, were all required to fill well his place; and he filled it well. In 1860, largely for the convenience of greater nearness to his office, he removed his residence to West Newton, where the Rev. Henry J. Patrick, an alumnus of Andover in 1853, who had been six years pastor at Bedford, Mass., in a few months became his pastor, and so continued to the end.

In 1843 certain Congregationalists, whose minds had been specially led to consider the importance to the country of the founding of distinctively Christian colleges in the rapidly growing Interior and the West, and who were deeply impressed with the necessity of some better system of planting such institutions, and of the wisdom of some method which should shield the giving people of the East from being perpetually at the mercy of indiscriminate appeal from them, founded “The Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West.” It remained a purely voluntary association, without formal legal basis, until 1872, when it was chartered by Massachusetts. Experience gradually developed and emphasized the fact that this new organization and the old American

Education Society had so many points in common as to make it possible—and, if possible, then imperative—to unite them under the economy of a single administration, and thus not only a little to curtail current expenditures, but also to diminish, by one, the multifariousness of the annual appeals to the Christian benevolence of the Congregational churches. A new charter was therefore obtained from the General Court of Massachusetts in 1874, in compliance with whose provisions the two Societies were brought together in May of that year. Until 1877, Rev. Dr. H. Q. Butterfield, now President of Olivet College, Mich., who had been the Secretary of the "College Society," as, for short, it had familiarly been called, remained in that relation, having an office in the city of New York. After that date the sole official charge of the united organization fell upon Dr. Tarbox, who held it until his resignation, in 1884, led to the selection of Rev. Dr. John A. Hamilton to fill his place.

In that singularly apt tribute, which, in the funeral address, Rev. Mr. Patrick paid to his parishioner and friend of many years, referring to the relation which during so long a period Dr. Tarbox had held to the hundreds and thousands of young men whom he had officially aided into the ministry, he said :

The great work of his (Dr. Tarbox's) life is unseen. He wrought for more than thirty years at the fountains of influence, moving among the colleges, seminaries and churches, and putting his hand upon the great body of students with whom he was connected and corresponded through his secretaryship. No one can estimate the results of such sympathy, counsel and aid, upon this large company of ministers. They were preaching yesterday, while he was silent in death—but through them, though dead, he yet speaketh.

During these three-and-thirty years Dr. Tarbox kept steadily on his way. There were not a few discouragements. There was nothing instant, popular, magnetic and appealing in the call which he had to utter. And there grew up in certain quarters, a notion—diligently fostered by certain brethren of a good deal of strong physique, and even more of comfortable self-reliance—that a charity which helps men into the ministry is a mistake; that it coddles

candidates, who, if left to rough it for themselves, would, if they deserved it, get into the ministry with a really much more useful training in consequence of the hardships they had undergone; and that any young man incompetent to hoe his own unassisted row into the pulpit, had better stay out of it. And something was often said in disparagement of the quality of manhood which the Education Society fostered, as if, if not positively milksops, its beneficiaries could seldom hope to win through the rule of the survival of the fittest.

The Secretary valiantly defended his cause. He went back to the beginning of the endeavor, and showed how brilliant all along, on the lists of the great men of the Congregational faith and order—pastors, missionaries, college presidents and professors, secretaries of benevolent societies and the like—were the names of those whose early poverty, and the huge discouragements of whose lot, would almost surely have relegated them to a life of meagre obscurity, but for its timely aid. This method of dealing with the subject, which he found to be very useful in his popular appeals, added strength to his natural fondness for biography, and statistics, and suggestive facts; without purpose on his own part training him thus for the large work subsequently done by him in that department. To one with a natural constitution as robust, and health as firm as his, to one withal industrious and holding the pen of a ready writer, such a secretary-ship offered many fragments of time, which, without injustice to any honorable claim of the Society, could be applied to various authorship; and of these our friend made diligent use. Naturally his past connection with the *Congregationalist*, added to the fact that the office of that journal and his own always happened to be near together, for many years led him to write considerably—as always acceptably—for its columns. Many of the little poems of the volume to which reference will hereafter be made, were written for and first published in its issues.

His career as an author, as I have said, really began in College, in 1838—when he was three-and-twenty; and I have been able to

identify the following miscellaneous productions of his pen—aside from his annual reports, and his various pleas in the line of his official specialty—which I arrange in the order of their issue; and which will thus show the habitual fertility of a busy man, who was all along, with the exception of his last four years, filling an important and exacting office.

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| 1  | Harriet—A Sketch. <i>Yale Literary Magazine.</i>  | Vol. IV.   | 1838. |
| 2  | Tecumseh—A Review. <i>New Englander.</i>  | Vol. I.    | 1843. |
| 3  | Midnight—A Poem. <i>New Englander.</i>  | Vol. I.    | 1843. |
| 4  | Fourierism. <i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. IV.   | 1846. |
| 5  | George Hooker Colton. <i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. VII.  | 1849. |
| 6  | A Correct Apprehension of God Essential to True Worship:<br>or a View of the Doctrine of the Trinity as it stands<br>connected with the whole Gospel Scheme. (Pam.) |            | 1849. |
| 7  | Tennyson, In Mem.—A Review. <i>N. Englander.</i>  | Vol. VIII. | 1851. |
| 8  | The College and the Church. <i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XI.   | 1853. |
| 9  | Christ's Rule for Alms-giving. <i>New Englander.</i>  | Vol. XIII. | 1855. |
| 10 | Aaron Burr. <i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XVI.  | 1858. |
| 11 | Theodore Parker. <i>New Englander.</i>  | Vol. XVI.  | 1858. |
| 12 | Winnie and Walter Stories (Juvenile), 4 Vols. }<br><i>J. E. Tilton &amp; Co.</i>  |            | 1860. |
| 13 | Where do Scholars and Great Men come from? }<br><i>Congregational Quarterly.</i>  | Vol. III.  | 1861. |
| 14 | When I Was a Boy (Juvenile), (Vol.)   |            | 1862. |
| 15 | The Hebrew Worshipper. <i>New Englander.</i>  | Vol. XXI.  | 1862. |
| 16 | English and American University Life. <i>Boston Review.</i>   | Vol. II.   | 1862. |
| 17 | Nineveh, or the Buried City. <i>Cong'l. Pub. Soc.</i> (Vol.)  |            | 1864. |
| 18 | The Curse, etc., on the Race of Ham. <i>Am. Tract Soc.</i> (Vol.)   |            | 1865. |
| 19 | Table of Members and descent of Council of 1865, etc.   |            | 1865. |
| 20 | Noah Webster. <i>Congregational Quarterly.</i>  | Vol. VII.  | 1865. |
| 21 | Universal Suffrage. <i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XXIV. | 1865. |
| 22 | Old Connecticut vs. the Atlantic Monthly. }<br><i>New Englander.</i>  | Vol. XXIV. | 1865. |
| 23 | Tyre and Alexandria Chief Commercial Cities of }<br><i>Scrip. Times.</i> (Vol.)   |            | 1866. |
| 24 | S. W. S. Dutton, D.D. <i>Congregational Quarterly.</i>  | Vol. VIII. | 1866. |
| 25 | Missionary Patriots—The Schneiders. (Vol.)  |            | 1867. |



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| 26 | Unitarianism—Its Present Condition. }<br><i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XXVI.             | 1867. |
| 27 | Uncle George's Stories (Juvenile), (Vol.)  | <i>Cong. Pub. Soc.</i> | 1868. |
| 28 | Origin of the Old Testament. <i>Hours at Home.</i>   | Vol. VII.              | 1868. |
| 29 | Jonathan Edwards. <i>Bibliotheca Sacra.</i>  | Vol. XXVI.             | 1869. |
| 30 | Forefathers' Day—Winthrop and Emerson. }<br><i>New Englander.</i>  | Vol. XXX.              | 1871. |
| 31 | Timothy Edwards and his Parishioners. }<br><i>Congregational Quarterly.</i>  | Vol. XIII.             | 1871. |
| 32 | Ruling Elders in Early New England Churches. }<br><i>Congregational Quarterly.</i>   | Vol. XIV.              | 1872. |
| 33 | Reminiscences of the Stackpole House. }<br><i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XXXII.            | 1873. |
| 34 | Richard Salter Storrs, D.D. <i>Congregational</i> }<br><i>Quarterly.</i>   | Vol. XVI.              | 1874. |
| 35 | Plymouth and the Bay. <i>Cong. Quarterly.</i>  | Vol. XVII.             | 1875. |
| 36 | Genesis of the New England Churches. }<br><i>New Englander.</i>  | Vol. XXXIV.            | 1875. |
| 37 | Battle of Bunker Hill. <i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XXXIV.            | 1875. |
| 38 | Life of Israel Putnam. (Vol.) <i>Lockwood, Brooks &amp; Co.</i>  |                        | 1876. |
| 39 | Gov. William Alfred Buckingham. <i>Congre-</i> }<br><i>gational Quarterly.</i>   | Vol. XVIII.            | 1876. |
| 40 | Samuel Adams. <i>N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register.</i>  | Vol. XXX.              | 1876. |
| 41 | John Dwight and his Descendants. <i>New</i> }<br><i>England.</i>   | Vol. XXXV.             | 1876. |
| 42 | The Religious and Ecclesiastical Contrast within the bounds }<br>of Suffolk West Conference, between the years }<br>1776 and 1876. (Pamphlet.) |                        | 1876. |
| 43 | Rev. Selah Burr Treat. <i>Cong. Quarterly.</i>   | Vol. XIX.              | 1877. |
| 44 | Early New England Psalmody. <i>Bibliotheca</i> }<br><i>Sacra.</i>  | Vol. XXXVI.            | 1879. |
| 45 | Our New England Thanksgiving histori- }<br>cally considered. <i>N. Englander.</i>  | Vol. XXXVIII.          | 1879. |
| 46 | Advantages of private Instruction for the }<br>Ministry. <i>Bibliotheca Sacra.</i>   | Vol. XXXVII.           | 1880. |
| 47 | William Ely. <i>Memorial Biographies.</i>  | Vol. I.                | 1880. |
| 48 | New England Poetry of the 17th Century. }<br><i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XXXIX.            | 1880. |
| 49 | The Light of Asia. <i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XXXIX.            | 1880. |
| 50 | Alfred Hawkins. <i>Memorial Biographies.</i>   | Vol. II.               | 1881. |

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| 51 | Private Instruction for the Ministry. }<br><i>Bibliotheca Sacra.</i>                     | Vol. XXXVIII. | 1881. |
| 52 | Congregational Trinitarian Churches in Boston }<br>since 1780. <i>Mem. Hist. Boston.</i> | Vol. III.     | 1881. |
| 53 | Nathan Strong, D.D. <i>N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register.</i> }                              | Vol. XXXVII.  | 1883. |
| 54 | Thomas Robbins, D.D. <i>Memorial Biographies.</i>  | Vol. III.     | 1883. |
| 55 | Chapter of Connecticut Reminiscences. }<br><i>New Englander.</i>                         | Vol. XLII.    | 1883. |
| 56 | Elam Smalley, D.D. <i>Memorial Biographies.</i>  | Vol. III.     | 1883. |
| 57 | Sir Walter Raleigh, and his Colony. (Vol.)   |               | 1884. |
| 58 | Thomas Robbins, D.D. <i>N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register.</i> }                             | Vol. XXXVIII. | 1884. |
| 59 | Jonathan Edwards as a Man. <i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XLIII.   | 1884. |
| 60 | The First Church of Hartford. <i>New Englander.</i>                                      | Vol. XLIII.   | 1884. |
| 61 | Songs and Hymns for Common Life. (Vol.) <i>D. Clapp &amp; Son.</i>                       |               | 1886. |
| 62 | Review of Prof. Dexter's Yale Biographies, etc. }<br><i>New Englander.</i>               | Vol. XLV.     | 1886. |
| 63 | Review of Dr. Woods's History of Andover. }<br><i>New Englander.</i>                     | Vol. XLV.     | 1886. |
| 64 | Diary of Thomas Robbins. (Vol.)  | Vol. I.       | 1886. |
| 65 | Diary of Thomas Robbins. (Vol.)  | Vol. II.      | 1887. |
| 66 | John Tarbox of Lynn, and his Descendants. }<br><i>N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register.</i>     | Vol. XLII.    | 1888. |
| 67 | Beliefs that dishonor God. <i>New Englander.</i>   | Vol. XLVII.   | 1888. |

Of these the eighth, ninth, thirteenth, forty-sixth and fifty-first, were obviously suggested by their author's special studies in connection with the office which he held.

*Two and fifty* articles, most of them upon subjects to require research, and of a magnitude to absorb many hours of solid application; and *fifteen* volumes—the last two of which contain nearly 2200 of the largest sized octavo pages of not large type, and which although the task was only that of editing and not of composing, heavily taxed that editor's skill and care in the abundance of the details for their multifarious notes, and the preparation of their admirable indexes of fifty-four solid three-column pages of the finest available type!

But this was by no means all. In 1863, Mr. Tarbox accepted

an election as a resident member of this Society—which, in his case, meant a *working* member. And since that time our quarterly journal has been again and again enriched by contributions from his pen not formally enumerated above. Of these there have been many notices of books, and since, in 1881, he was appointed our historiographer, his contributions to our necrology continued careful, constant and trustworthy until the pen dropped from his hand.\*

Such well-wrought work seldom fails of recognition and respect, and, in 1869—by that curious coincidence with which such lightning sometimes strikes an unanticipating sufferer—Mr. Tarbox simultaneously received the degree of Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) from Iowa College, and that of Doctor in Sacred Theology (S.T.D.) from his *Alma Mater*.

Beginning as a general writer, with a special trend toward poetry and criticism, in connection with his peculiar studies in the office which he held, Dr. Tarbox gradually came to have an extended and accurate familiarity with the ancient ways in New England, and to be regarded as an authority in her history.

Dr. Tarbox was welcome in all pulpits. And even those whose prejudices against "agents" impaired their interest in his appeals for the Society which he represented, were glad when they got a chance to hear him "preach the Gospel." One of his seminary companions, who has just been called to join him in a better world,† in one of his last letters, dictated after his hand could no longer hold the pen, said of his old friend:

At our second interview we walked half way to West Haven, and back,

\* The following resolutions, drawn up by Dr. Andrew P. Peabody, were then passed by the Society:

*Resolved*,—That we put on record an expression of our respect and reverence for our late associate, the Rev. Increase N. Tarbox, D.D., as an accomplished scholar, as an able writer, as a Christian minister of worthily high standing and reputation, and as having demonstrated the genuineness and power of his religious faith in the purity and sanctity of his life;

That we hold in mindful memory the union in him of firm convictions and broad sympathies,—of loyalty to his own views of truth and cordial and appreciating friendship for those allied to him only by honest belief and upright purpose;

That his long, precious, and indefatigable services as a member and officer of this Society demand no ordinary tribute of commemoration, and claim for him an honored place among the foremost names in our special department of research and investigation; and

That a copy of the above resolutions be transmitted to the family of the Rev. Dr. Tarbox.

† The Rev. Abijah Perkins Marvin, who died in Lancaster, Mass., Oct. 19, 1889.

and at that time a friendship was cemented which never cooled. He was a thoroughly honest and candid man, without art or guile; a faithful and successful pastor, and an admirable Secretary. He was one of the best sermonizers I have ever known intimately.

A vein of quiet pleasantry ran through Dr. Tarbox's nature, which often came to his relief in the discussion of a dry subject, and which made him specially acceptable at the meetings of Congregational clubs, College festivals, all manner of church and town anniversaries, and the like. A specimen of this happens to be at hand in some verses on "Timothy Dwight," which were read before the Yale Alumni Association of Boston and vicinity in its annual assembling in February, 1887,—one large part of the fun of which consisted in the presence of the distinguished president of the university, who now bears and adorns the venerable name. As the parsons used often to say, "we will now use the first three, and the last three, stanzas," thus :

I sing of Timothy Dwight,  
That manyheaded man,  
Who first appeared upon these shores  
When Dedham town began.

He trod the Dedham wilds,  
A stirring boy of five,  
But did his part before he died  
To stock the family hive.

With six most worthy wives  
And fourteen children dear,  
He gave the race a vigorous start  
That reaches down to *here*.

\* \* \* \* \*

How many Timothy Dwights  
Now live upon the earth,  
Who to the Dedham youngster  
Can surely trace their birth;

How many Timothy Dwights  
The future shall unfold,  
In the dispersion of the tribes,  
Must here be left untold.

But certain 'tis, and sure,  
That since the race set out  
In Dedham woods, the 'Timothy Dwights  
Have always been about.

In a different mood, into which sarcasm crept, he delighted the Congregational Club of Boston on Forefathers' Day, in 1880, by his delineation of a "Pilgrim Father" reconstructed to "meet the demands of the age." In the course of this he said :

The Pilgrim Father should have been a man  
Who had no private prejudice to smother,  
Built on a large, expansive, liberal plan,  
To whom one thing were good as any other;  
Who, had he lived back when the race began,  
Would not have minded though Cain killed his brother;  
A man so very round, and full, and pious  
As to be free from every shade of bias.

He should have patronized with equal zeal  
Every adventurous and random rover;  
Have freely shared his dear-bought common weal  
With every renegade that might come over;  
Ready to grant each wanderer's appeal.  
Whether he hailed from Holland, Dublin, Dover;  
A man who held it strict impartiality  
Not to distinguish virtue from rascality.

\* \* \* \* \*

He should have ~~been~~ landed on this western shore  
With less of Bible, and with more of science;  
Bible is good, but had he pondered o'er  
What science taught, and made that his reliance,  
He could have reared from his exhaustless store,  
An empire grand, and bid the world defiance :  
Great pity that with chances so prodigious  
He should have been a trifle too religious !

Not every day do we find such ability as Dr. Tarbox had to drudge intelligently and untiringly among dusty and obsolete facts, conjoined to the vivacity of a highly imaginative and really poetic nature. But no man, we think, can read the little volume so pleasantly named *Songs and Hymns for Common Life*, without according

to its author some possession of the true power of verse. His was not the case of the clerk to whom Pope referred :

Who pens a stanza when he should engross ;

but rather, like Pope himself, he—

—— lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.

Those who remember his *Phi Beta Kappa* poem at Yale in 1871, or who have been so fortunate as to secure a copy of the privately published and privately distributed volume above named, will readily concede to its author a place in the list of American poets.

What can be more exquisite, as a *vers de famille*, than his "My Little Playmate," the spirit of which comes out in its first and last stanzas, thus :

I am a grandsire, journeying close  
On three-score years and ten ;  
And when my daily tasks are done,  
And laid aside my pen,  
I call my little playmate in  
Now passing on to three,  
For I have need as much of her  
As she has need of me.

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh let me never grow too old  
To join in merry glee  
With any bright and laughing child  
That climbs upon my knee ;  
Let me still keep the sportive mind  
Until my dying day,  
For what is life, in all its length,  
Without the children's play ?

After the resignation of his secretary-ship at the age of a little more than sixty-nine, Dr. Tarbox, still in fair vigor of health, frequented his home, husbanding the resources which years of diligent and prudent toil had made ready for such a day, and gave himself more entirely to his loved literary work. A glance back at the list of the

productions of his fertile pen already given, will show the remarkable total, for his last four years of life, of seven review articles or critical essays, and four volumes, two of which were of large size, and most exacting in their demands upon him for proof-reading, and indexing, as well as editing. Perhaps he over-wrought. At any rate he took refuge in a milder climate for the winter of 1887-8, in the grateful company of relatives from New Haven, Conn. In the Davis Hotel, at Kittrell, N. C., he found great comfort and decided benefit, until somehow he was smitten with acute congestion of the lungs, during which he was insensible for several hours, and which almost terminated his life, and the exhaustion from which, no doubt, did end it after his return.

The writer had a charming letter from him toward the last of February, in which he referred tenderly to what was a strong point with both of us—the Pilgrim Fathers; and illustrated the generosity of his nature by over-praising a word-picture, which, in unwonted verse, I had some time before attempted of the happenings at Plymouth on Monday, 11-21 Dec. 1620.

Dr. Tarbox was spared to return home, and after a little resting from his journey, he went into town to his haunts near the corner of Beacon and Somerset Streets; spending some hours in the Genealogical rooms, and among his old *confrères* in the Congregational House, who little realized that they were bidding him at once welcome and good-bye. He had just strength enough left to get home, and there laid down upon the lounge among the books that he loved, and in close converse with which his whole life had been spent; and having declared his state to be one of perfect peace with God and man, he quietly breathed there his last breath. This was on Thursday, May 3, 1888, when he was seventy-three years, two months and twenty-three days old.

There had been still a sense of youth, and an appetite for life, in him. He had a generous and hearty sympathy with what is best here, but his conversation had been in heaven,—or, as the New Version puts it,—his citizenship was there. It did not appear that

he was taken by surprise. He had thought the whole subject over, and while he would have been glad to have worked here a little longer, had such been God's will, he humbly felt that he was prepared for death, whenever and however God might call. He tenderly loved his surviving children and those children's children. He loved his pastor and his church, and he loved his friends, and took comfort in the large and honorable circle of his literary associates. But, beyond question, he esteemed it "very far better" to "depart and be with Christ."

His funeral service was attended on the following Monday (May 7), in the Congregational Meeting-house in West Newton, where he had worshipped; his pastor, Rev. H. J. Patrick, making a fitting and beautiful address, the service being shared by the Rev. George A. Gordon of the Old South Church in Boston, and the Rev. Dr. Daniel Butler of Waverley, one of Dr. Tarbox's very old friends and co-Secretaries.

It was an ideal spring day, and as in the slanting sunlight the body was laid by the side of his dear wife and the two little ones who had gone before, it was in the full assurance of a glorious immortality; and with an impulse on the part of his fellow-workers, as from the place of his well-earned repose they retraced their steps to what might remain of their own life-toil, to give diligent heed to those pregnant words of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

We desire that each one of you may shew the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

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Dr. and Mrs. Tarbox had four children, viz. :—

- i. CHARLES PORTER, born 11 July, 1846; died 12 Sept. 1849.
- ii. SUSAN WATERS, b. 19 Nov. 1849; m. 10 Sept. 1872, Samuel Carr, Jr., Esq., of Boston, President of the Central Bank.
- iii. MARY PORTER, b. 22 Oct. 1851; m. 26 Oct. 1876, F. F. Raymond, Esq., of the law firm of Clarke & Raymond, Boston.
- iv. HELEN JANE, b. 26 Feb. 1854; d. 7 April, 1858.



And now, how better can we all take leave of that thought of our brother beloved which it has been the object of these pages to bur-nish to a momentary recognition, than in his own sweet words on "The Good Man's Death"?

Go, take thy rest: the day is done,  
And all its toil and burden o'er,  
No more the heat of burning sun,  
The pelting storm shall break no more.

Go, take thy rest: a good man dies,  
And yields his spirit back to God;  
But on his path a radiance lies,  
A light o'er all the fields he trod.

Go, take thy rest: the night comes on,  
And stars shine out along the sky;  
But night fortells a fairer dawn,  
Whene'er the good and faithful die.







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